

## BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

### ON

## DEFINING AIRMEN'S TIME

### PURPOSE

Propose actionable, creative, and practical solutions to institutionalize a paradigm shift in how the Air Force, at all levels, conceptualizes Airmen's time.

### DISCUSSION

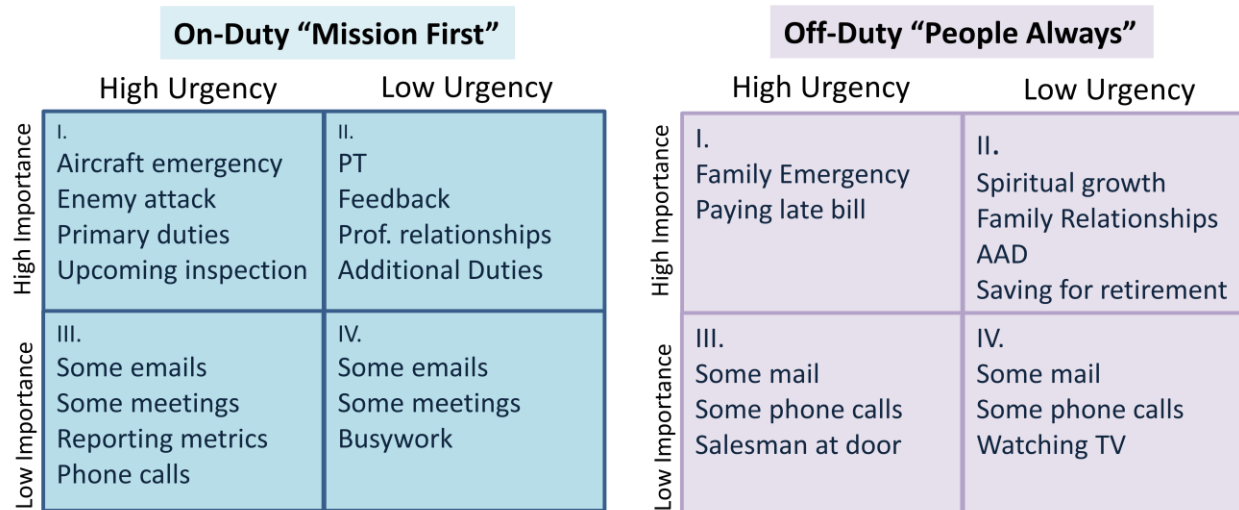
- Airmen are the Air Force's most valuable asset and Airmen's time is a finite, valuable resource.
  - The Air Force must manage this time effectively, no different from managing fuel or money.
  - An institutional vision must balance Airmen's duty and personal time to help cope with competing job and family demands against Airmen's finite time.
- The study of Air Force doctrine, instructions, and the 2008/2009 Airmen's Time Assessments reveals three problems regarding the current paradigm of time.
  - Airmen's time is not defined. Guidance needs to define time so that it is viewed as a finite resource that must be spent wisely to support commander and mission priorities.
  - Second, the Air Force poorly prioritizes on-duty time creating a culture where everything is a priority and all tasks are equally important.
  - Third, the enterprise does not treat time as a quantifiable, manageable resource.
- Time management theory provides the foundation to define time.
  - Stephen Covey, a time management expert, argues that the most important aspect of time management is prioritization. Leaders should organize and execute priorities.
  - Covey discusses urgency vs. importance via matrices (Figure 1, attachment). Time managers should balance daily urgent activities against long-term important activities.
  - Separating priorities between duty and family time would allow the Air Force to avoid the individual "rack and stack" of mission against family/personal time (Figure 2, attachment).

- The SOS Think Tank devised three approaches to shift the AF paradigm on time.
  - A value-stream mapping model identifies value added activities and eliminates waste.
  - A time budget model treats time as other finite AF resources by budgeting and assessing expenditures akin to use of funds or fuel. Time is a zero sum game and the organization needs to hold individuals and leaders accountable for its use.
  - An effects-based approach to time combines value stream mapping's prioritization (effectiveness) with time budgeting's emphasis on proper allocation of time to tasks (efficiency).
    - A two dimensional approach is vital because "why" time is spent is equally as important as "how much" time is spent.
    - This model identifies inefficiencies and disconnects between the priority of a task and time allocated/spent on that task, enabling leaders to realign time use.
    - This model balances commanders' required effects (priorities) against the measures of performance (time cost) of activities over a ten-year horizon.

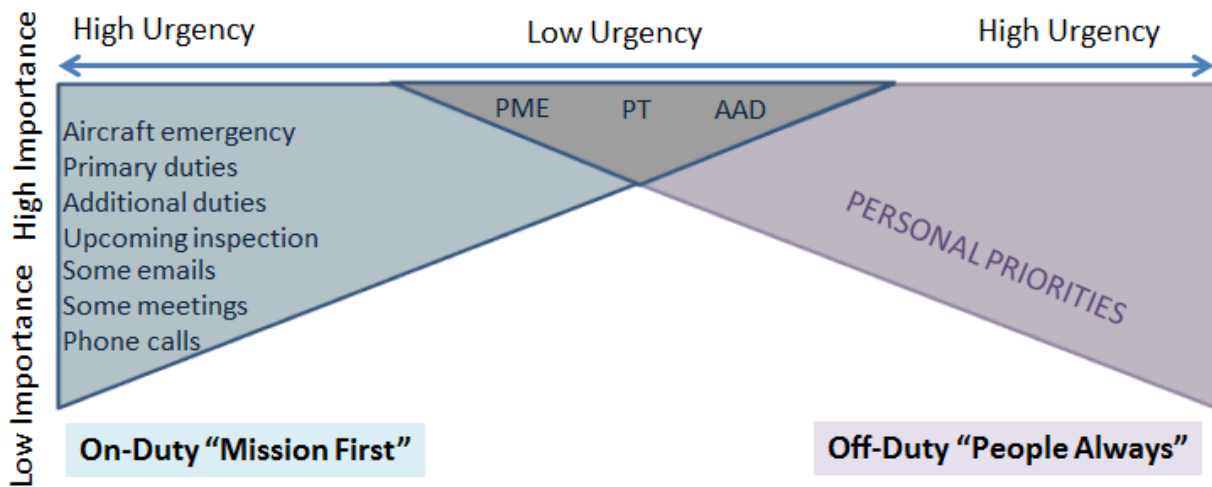
## RECOMMENDATION

- Institutionalize an effects-based culture regarding time through a CSAF sight picture, revisions to existing Air Force instructions and doctrine documents, and incorporation of the concept into Commanders courses, PME, and accessions training.
- Install an Airmen's time "gatekeeper" entity at the NAF level as a one-way check valve for wing commanders to have input into the prioritization and allocation of their Airmen's time.
- Use the effects-based approach to time to "eliminate duplicative and extraneous training" such as low-value CBTs and completing PME both in correspondence and in residence.
- Utilize the effects-based approach to identify and reduce additional duties whose time cost outweighs their value.

# ATTACHMENT TO BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER ON DEFINING AIRMEN'S TIME



**Figure 1.** Covey's matrices applied to Airmen's time.



**Figure 2.** Overlap between competing duty and personal time requirements.